

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Jovita Carranza
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza,

Thank you for your continued dedication to the American people amid this unprecedented health crisis. Thanks to your work and the leadership of President Trump, the Small Business Administration (SBA) has responded to the COVID-19 outbreak with strong financial aid programs that will provide essential support to the nearly 900,000 small businesses in Georgia.

New SBA programs such as the Payment Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) advance will be crucial in protecting the American workforce in the coming months. To that end, I would like to direct your attention to a critical sector of Georgia's economy that appears to have been left behind in this effort.

I am deeply troubled by reports from my constituents that farmers are either partially or completely ineligible for small business aid included in the CARES Act (PL 116-136). Specifically, Section 1110 of the CARES Act provides direct loan assistance through the EIDL program to small businesses that have incurred losses from the coronavirus outbreak. I am disappointed to learn that farmers and agriculture businesses are currently ineligible for this program despite Congress listing "small agriculture cooperatives" as an eligible entity for a loan made under section 7(b)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)(2)). It was Congress' intent that the CARES Act address the needs of all small businesses struggling in the current environment and I implore you to address this apparent oversight.

I am also concerned over reports that agriculture labor is not being adequately addressed through the PPP loan program. A productive farm requires access to consistent and reliable labor and Georgia farmers work tirelessly to acquire workers to plant, harvest, and process their products every season. Farmers must be compensated for their entire legal workforce or the CARES Act will not accomplish its intended goal of stabilizing the American economy and supporting employers and their employees.

Agriculture is Georgia's number one industry, and our state is home to a strong and active farming community with more than 42,000 farms. Agricultural production contributes \$76 billion dollars in output to Georgia's \$1.07 trillion economy and is connected both directly and indirectly to nearly 400,000 jobs in the state. Despite the success of Georgia agriculture, it has never been harder to be a farmer. From low commodity prices to unfair trade policy from foreign governments, and a series of devastating hurricanes and natural disasters in recent years, Georgia farmers are fighting every day to provide food and clothing to the American people. As a

member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, it is my duty to ensure that the issues facing our rural and farming communities are thoroughly addressed.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Swift action from SBA to address these concerns will not only bring clarity to struggling farmers, but accomplish President Trump's goal of providing relief to all Americans in this difficult time. It is my hope that we can work together to protect the American people and ensure our country's recovery from this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Loeffler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator